

Agency: Department of Natural Resources**Project Title:****Project Type:** Remodel and Reconstuction

Fort Abercrombie Tourist Bus Parking/Turnaround and Facilities Upgrade

State Funding Requested: \$1,300,000**House District:** 36 / R

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

The Fort Abercrombie project will expand the parking and circulation pattern for modern tour buses. It also upgrades the interpretive sites, while also concentrating on safety and sanitation issues.

Funding Plan:**Total Cost of Project:** \$1,300,000*There is no other funding needed***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Cruise ship passengers and independent tourists alike love the WWII bunkers, trails, flowers and whale viewing at Fort Abercrombie. The major obstacle in providing transportation by modern tour buses is the fact there is inadequate parking at the site known as Miller Point.

In addition, there is no turn-a-round at Miller Point. Currently one person stands at the bottom of the hill and lets a single bus through the gate. Another person meets the bus at the top and guides it through a four-point turn until it is facing downhill. At this point the passengers disembark. That bus then departs before another bus is allowed up the steep, single-lane dirt road. This procedure is repeated at roughly 20 minute intervals until the multitude of busses are emptied. The drill is nearly as nerve wracking for the return trip. Since a typical cruise ship journeying to Kodiak carry's about 1,100 passengers, you begin to see how time consuming and exhausting this scenario is.

The plan will not only build adequate parking for the busses and private vehicles, but it will also provide a bus turn-a-round, thus making this tourist attraction more efficient and considerably safer. This project will also upgrade the old army ammo bunker which houses the WWII museum and upgrade the interpretive signs and focus on additional safety and sanitation concerns.

Project Timeline:

Once these funds are secured by the department, an RFP will be issued. Constuction is expected to begin the summer of 2009 and if necessary, be completed during the 2010 construction season.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Kodiak State Parks under the Department of Natural Resources

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: James King - Div. of Parks
Address: 550 W. 7th Ave., Ste 1380
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone Number: (907)269-8071
Email: james.king@alaska.gov

Total Project Snapshot Report

FY 2010 Capital Budget

TPS Report 53054v1

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No

For use by Co-chair Staff Only:

Kodiak State Parks
CITIZENS' ADVISORY BOARD

1400 Abercrombie Dr.
Kodiak, AK 99615
(907) 486-6339 Fax 486-3320
March 6, 2009

Dear Representative Austerman,

We realize there are enormous fiscal issues facing the State, but I hope you can spend a moment to consider a simple solution to a problem facing Kodiak's Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park.

The Kodiak State Parks Citizens' Advisory Board, which includes the City's harbormaster, is concerned about cruise ship visitors because the park's parking facilities are grossly inadequate to accommodate big buses.

Tourists love the WWII bunkers, trails, flowers, and whale viewing, but getting them in and out (by bus) is problematic. Not only is there no room to park at Miller Point, there is barely room to turn a bus around. This wasn't much of an issue when only a half dozen ships called each year. But 22 large ships are scheduled in 2009. That means there will be 22 traffic jams on the park's road network! These roads, really jeep trails, were not designed to accommodate large modern tour busses.

Here is the convoluted drill our park staff and volunteers (primarily Joe Stevens and Curt Law) go through to get tour busses up to Miller Point. One of them stands at the bottom of the hill and lets a single bus through gate. Another person meets the bus at the top and guides it through a four-point turn until it is facing downhill. Passengers disembark. The first bus must depart before another is allowed up the steep, single-lane, dirt road. This procedure is repeated at 20 minutes intervals until all the busses are empty. The drill is nearly as bad for the return trip. As you can imagine, it's a noisy and exhausting (pun intended) process since a typical ship has 1,100 passengers and each bus only carries about 35.


Our sole park ranger has only two seasonal workers plus a couple wonderful volunteers. Unfortunately they spend far too much time directing traffic. The good news is that a "shovel-ready" solution is at hand. Please see the attached documents. The bus parking issue was studied; improvements were designed, and approved by the Advisory Board last fall. The Board believed that the Legislature had, or would appropriate, construction funds. We now understand the project is shelved.

The Board understands fiscal constraints, but also knows that there are considerable dollars building up in the cruise ship passenger head tax fund. Since the majority of that revenue is intended for cruise-ship-related infrastructure improvements, Ft Abercrombie is an appropriate place to invest it. Waiting for a typical appropriation to arrive seems unlikely.


You may recall that an appropriation from the head tax fund was made to the City of Kodiak last year. An RFP will soon be awarded for a waterfront master planning study under that grant; however the state park cannot be included in the City's study. A separate appropriation is necessary for construction/study at the park.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

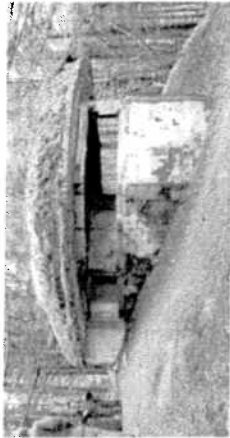
Sincerely,



Solveig Christenson
Kodiak State Parks
Advisory Board Chair



Marty Owen
Board member and
Harbormaster, City of Kodiak



10. Repair DEC Bunker installing steel brace



9. Install Post & Chain pedestrian railing around both 8" gun battery



8. Install arctic entrance in museum entrance & historical roof over entrance

Fort Abercrombie Priority List of Items

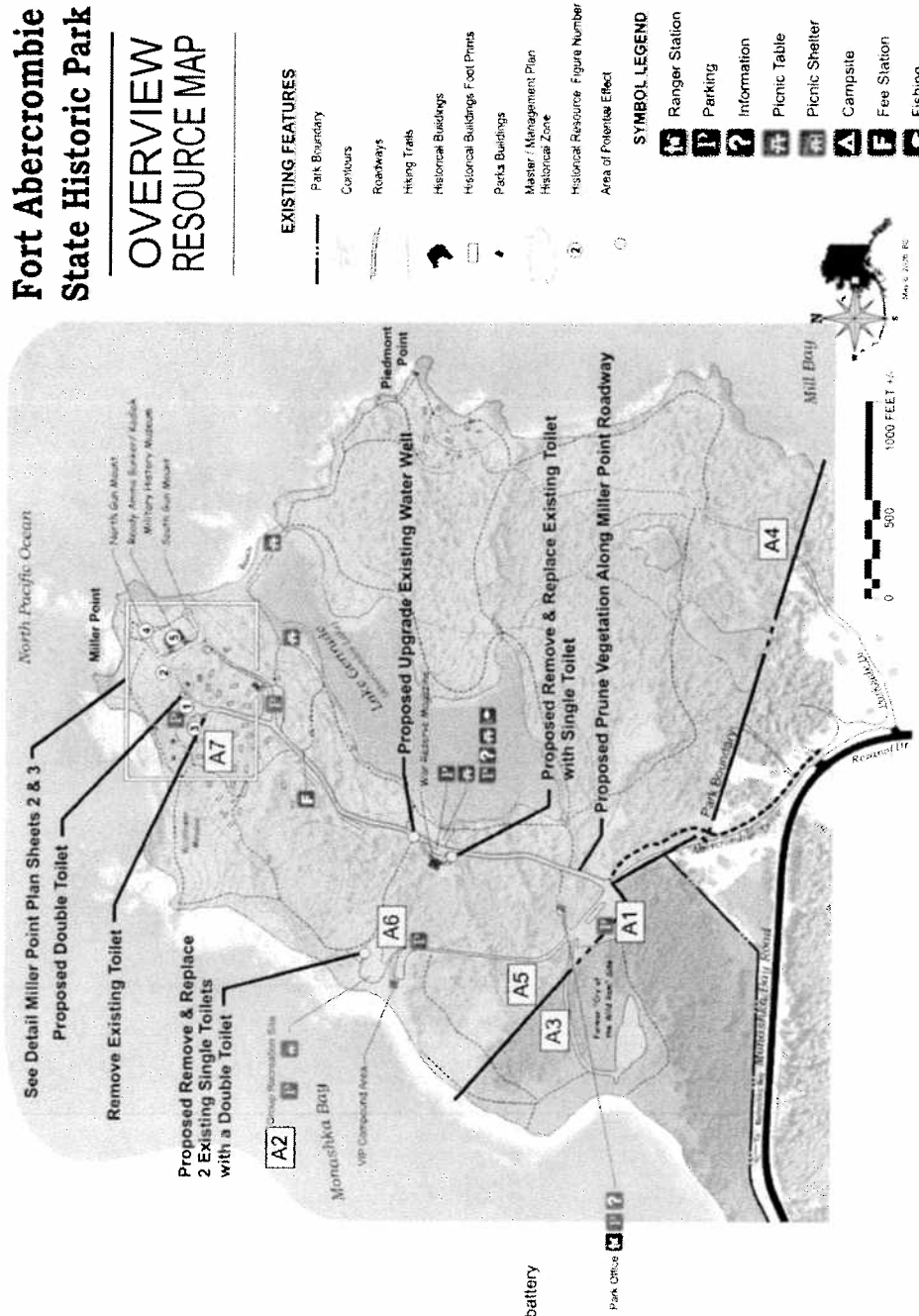
Summer 2008

1. Remove & install single toilet at War Reserve
2. Remove two single toilets & install one double toilet at group area
3. Remove concrete well pad and install new pad at higher elevation
4. Trim trees along access road to Miller Point
5. Replace Fire Pits & Tables in Picnic Area

Summer 2009/2010

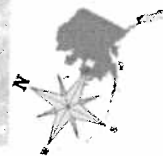
5. Develop large vehicle turnaround area with vehicle parking area
6. Remove existing toilet and install new toilet at Miller Point
7. Remove existing interpretive kiosk install new orientation kiosk
8. Install arctic entrance in museum entrance & historical roof over entrance
9. Install Post & Chain pedestrian railing around both 8" gun battery
10. Repair DEC Bunker installing steel brace
11. Install Quonset Hut

Fort Abercrombie State Historic Park OVERVIEW RESOURCE MAP



Additional funding will be required for: (not in any order or priority) [A4] [A7]

- A1. Trailhead Parking and Park Entrance Area
 - A2. Fix the roof on the group picnic shelter
 - A3. Develop a new Camping Area
 - A4. Develop a small-Trailhead Parking area at the end of Parkside Dr in the park boundary
 - A5. Develop a Maintenance Yard
 - A6. Develop parking and ADA access to the group area
 - A7. Develop Master Interpretive Plan for Cultural / Natural Resources
- Implement Interpretive Plan self guided interpretive pathway & displays





MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Alaska State Parks
Director's Office

TO: Erin Harrington
Legislative Aide
Rep. Austerman's Office

DATE: March 26, 2009

PHONE: (907) 269-8700

FAX: (907) 269-8907

FROM: James King *James King*
Director, DPOR

SUBJECT: Nominations/Comments
Cruise Tax Potential Projects

In response to your request here is a list Alaska State Park improvements and maintenance projects that will benefit or directly serve cruise ship passengers. These projects are located in port-of-call communities or are associated with the flow of cruise ship passengers or cruise businesses. We have attached preliminary estimates and a description of the relationship between project and visitors/use attributable to the cruise industry.

Fort Abercrombie SHP Historical Museum and Improvements, Kodiak. This site is high on the tour companies list to visit in Kodiak. Improvements include upgrades to the old army ammo bunker which houses the WWII museum, expanding the parking and circulation pattern for tour buses, upgrades the interpretation, and concentrates on safety and sanitation issues. Estimated price is \$1.3 million dollars.

Totem Bight SHP Renovation and Improvements, Ketchikan. This park is the "crown jewel" for the visitor industry with 14 totem poles and authentic clan house. Improvements would include refurbishment of the old weathered poles, upgrade the trail, build a pole restoration shed, add an adequate visitor contact station, and improve the traffic circulation. Improvements estimate between \$2.5 million dollars. This site is offered as a destination on most cruise lines.

Petroglyph Beach, Wrangell. This historic site and unique experience is highly visited by cruise ship passengers when entering this port of call. Land acquisition for parking has been in the works for years as well as improvements that include visitor amenities, viewing decks, historical surveys, and interpretation. Estimated cost is approximately \$600,000 for land and \$300,000 for improvements.

Castle Hill SHP Improvements and Historic Artifacts, Sitka. Castle Hill is directly adjacent to the lightering facility in Sitka and is on the walking tour for cruise ships. Historical artifacts have been unearthed and are in storage. This project would be an inventory and display of the artifacts along with improvements to the site for better tour interaction. Estimate cost at approximately \$600,000.

Fort Rousseau State Park, Sitka. This is the newest park in the State Parks system. It is a WWII historic site with great tour and interpretation potential. Estimate for upgrades for a lightering facility, interpretive trail, and group area is about \$1 million dollars.

Chilkoot River Bear Viewing, Haines. This site and bear viewing attraction is a great hit with the tour companies operating in Haines. A new access road, safe bear viewing decks, and an interpretation program is needed to fulfill the needs of visitors to the site. Estimate for the project is \$2 million dollars.

Wickersham House and the Gruening Cabin Upgrade, Juneau. These two homes are directly related to the historic past for the State of Alaska. Tours and visitors used to eat and listen to talks about settling of the Last Frontier in the Wickersham house. Vast improvements are needed to have these houses ready for tour in the future. The Wickersham house needs an estimated \$1.5 million dollars to finish the first floor renovation and get the historic items displayed. The Gruening house needs a complete overhaul along with a caretaker house for a cost of \$2.4 million dollars.

Rika's Roadhouse Interpretation, Delta Junction. Bus tours pull into this site along Tanana River so that visitors can get a taste of the old timers' migration north. This historic building needs interpretive displays and upgrades to the dilapidated buildings. Estimated cost is \$790,000.

South Denali Visitor Center, Trapper Creek. This project has the backing from every visitor and cruise line in the state. Plans are for a new visitor center and extensive amenities. Total cost is estimated at \$39 million dollars. The State of Alaska has secured \$8.9 million dollars and additional funding is being sought.

Independence Mine SHP, Palmer. This is yet another historical venue with large bus tour operations. The mine buildings are falling apart and the history of gold mining in the area is going with it. To restore the buildings and mine tunnel for tours it would cost \$5 million dollars.

Turnagain Pass Improvements, Seward Highway Scenic Byway, Anchorage. Several Scenic Overlooks and rest area's line the Turnagain Arm which is heavily visited by bus tours heading to and from Seward and the Kenai Peninsula. Projects range from pullout upgrades at \$400,000 to major upgrade of \$2 million dollars.

Funds still needed to fix Abercrombie parking

Article published on Wednesday, Apr 01st, 2009

By BRADLEY ZINT

Mirror Writer

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Deferred maintenance funding for improving parking at Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park's Miller Point — a busy area in the summer with crowds of cruise ship tour buses needing to make "13-point turns" to get around — has been lost and the park is now asking for cruise ship head tax money, said District Ranger Kevin Murphy at Monday night's Kodiak State Parks citizens' advisory board meeting.

Earlier the board wrote a letter to Kodiak's Sen. Gary Stevens and Rep. Alan Austerman, who both agreed that the parking project was needed and said they would look into finding a way to fund it. But once funds are found, Murphy said the project's plans are ready.

"We couldn't be more shovel-ready for that project," Murphy said.

Murphy said in early February that other long-term goals for the park would be moving the campground at Miller Point down to the former "Cry of the Wild Ram" site, located near Abercrombie's entrance behind the front parking area. The area is under a trial management period to Fort Abercrombie, after which ownership of the area could be surrendered to the state park.

Murphy said the road into the Ram site, however, needs repair and is a liability. Last month, a Saab was driven down on the road — the end of which is a popular launching place for boats and kayaks going out to Ouzinkie — and got stuck. A tow truck came to retrieve the Saab, became stuck and another tow truck was called to get the first tow truck out. Murphy said stuck vehicles there are not uncommon.

"At least once a year we have a vehicle drive off into the ice," he said.

Improving the road would require re-crowning, adding barrier logs and culverts.

Kodiak State Parks also filled its admin II position with Michelle McGlashan of Anchorage. She is a lateral transfer as she already works for state parks. She will be in charge of all administrative work, permits and at the front lines of the Abercrombie office.

Murphy said he felt fortunate to have her come, because with the ongoing the state employee hiring freeze, the position would otherwise not be filled. He said the lateral transfer is "the only way we could pick somebody up right now."

Airport presentation

Brad Rolf, consultant team manger with Barnard Dunkelberg & Company, gave a presentation to the board on Kodiak State Airport's expansion plans to add safety buffer zones on the runways. One of the proposals in the plans is to extend the runway toward the mouth of the Buskin River — a contentious issue to many in the Kodiak community because of the river mouth's popular use for subsistence fishing.

Noteworthy in Rolf's presentation to the board were before-and-after pictures showing what the project might look like if extended north toward the Buskin or southward.

Board members told Rolf their concerns if the safety buffer zone addition was expanded toward the Buskin River: runoff into the river mouth from the urea used to de-ice the runways; the impact of the river during the construction process; people climbing onto the rocks of the buffer zone addition and potentially being in the way of moving airplanes; the noise of air traffic; and any scenic visual effects.

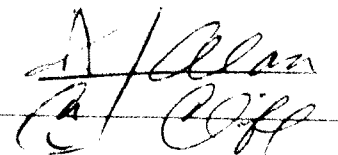
Rolf said the public draft environmental impact statement (EIS) has been pushed back to a September release because of negative community input to it being distributed during the summer, when many Alaskans are busy with other activities besides government and the chance for public input is lessened. It was originally planned to be released in July.

The final EIS is planned for February 2010, and the EIS process is scheduled to be completed by spring 2010.

Mirror writer Bradley Zint can be reached via e-mail at bzint@kodiakdailymirror.com.

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Erin Harrington



From: Lesh, Melanie G (DNR) [melanie.lesh@alaska.gov]
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2009 5:17 PM
To: Erin Harrington
Subject: FW: Fort Abercrombie: Looking for cost estimates, plans and other backup that DNR may have
Attachments: Cruise Tax Projects.pdf

Hi Erin,

I tried to get you more detail than this but as any additional detail comes in I'll forward it to you.

Melanie Lesh
Legislative Liaison
Department of Natural Resources
(907) 465-4730

From: King, James G (DNR)
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2009 4:11 PM
To: Lesh, Melanie G (DNR)
Subject: RE: Fort Abercrombie: Looking for cost estimates, plans and other backup that DNR may have

Melanie,

As requested here are some projects that would fit cruise ship funding. Also here are some details for Fort Abercrombie:

\$800k for the Miller Point, bus turnaround, parking, restroom, orientation kiosk, ADA access to Miller Point. Museum arctic entrance and Park Host site.

\$500k for the entrance roadway, intersection upgrade, trailhead parking area, beach access road improvements, pave the new pedestrian pathway, and bike racks.

From: Lesh, Melanie G (DNR)
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2009 11:25 AM
To: King, James G (DNR)
Subject: RE: Fort Abercrombie: Looking for cost estimates, plans and other backup that DNR may have

Do we have a more detailed cost estimate for the \$1.3 m.?

Melanie Lesh
Legislative Liaison
Department of Natural Resources
(907) 465-4730

From: Erin Harrington [mailto:Erin_Harrington@legis.state.ak.us]
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2009 10:32 AM
To: Lesh, Melanie G (DNR)
Cc: Murphy, Kevin (DNR); Matheny, Katrina M (LAA)
Subject: Fort Abercrombie: Looking for cost estimates, plans and other backup that DNR may have

3/26/2009

Hi Melanie

Here's the letter from the Citizens' Advisory Council. They have a meeting next Monday night.

We're interested in getting whatever backup the Office of Design and Construction might have including, most importantly, a project budget, but also any design docs.

Thanks, we'll talk soon.

Erin

From: DNR, Parks Kodiak Office (DNR sponsored) [mailto:dnr.pskodiak@alaska.gov]

Sent: Friday, March 06, 2009 9:52 AM

To: Rep. Alan Austerman

Subject:

Representative Austerman,

Please see the attached letter form the Kodiak State Parks Citizen Advisory Board.

If I can answer any questions for you, please do not hesitate to call.

Respectfully,

Kevin Murphy
Kodiak District Ranger
486-6352

COMPLETED**Erin Harrington**

From: Erin Harrington
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2009 11:05 AM
To: Marty Owen (mowen@city.kodiak.ak.us)
Cc: Doug Letch; Cliff Stone
Subject: State Park Citizens' Advisory Board

EA
PVI

Hi Marty

Please share this email with Solveig Christenson, as we don't have an email address for her.

We received your letter from the Advisory Board (dated March 6) regarding the bus parking issue.

Under the 90-day session, our budget process is extremely accelerated. Unfortunately, both the House budget and the Capital Budget requests were already finished by that date.

I'm going to follow up with our Chief of Staff, Cliff Stone, to see if there are any possible avenues here. I assume you sent a similar letter to Sen. Gary Stevens. Their budget process trails ours (the House finishes budget work first). I'm going to cc Doug Letch to see if their timing still includes leeway for additional considerations. My guess is that it does not, but I'm not certain.

I know that's not great news, but the unfortunate nature of the beast in this shortened session. It leaves a very small window for us to coordinate with our communities.

Marty, I have another question, I guess. I know that at times this bus parking proposal has been quite controversial. What is the recent evolution?

I hope you and Marion are well. I look forward to seeing you when I'm back in town next month. I'll be working for Alan throughout the interim, too, and am keen on getting to work on a number of his priorities.

Erin

Erin Harrington
Legislative Aide to Rep. Alan Austerman
Capitol Building Room 434
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-2487
(800) 865-2487

We need a \$ amount +